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**Evaluation**

# Management response to the independent review of the UNDP evaluation policy

## Context, background and findings

1. UNDP concurs with the main findings regarding the relevance of the UNDP evaluation policy. UNDP acknowledges that the findings confirm a number of issues with respect to implementation of the evaluation policy, including the need for increasing organizational commitment to results-based management (RBM) and the performance of the decentralized evaluation system. UNDP senior management is fully committed to addressing these challenges and strengthening the culture of RBM across the organization.

## Actions already taken or ongoing to strengthen RBM and evaluation performance in UNDP

2. UNDP is investing in its capacity for results-based planning, monitoring and evaluation at country, regional and global levels. Particular efforts are under way to strengthen the role of Regional Bureaux in their oversight and support functions with country offices and in improving overall country office performance in RBM, including in the conduct of decentralized evaluations. For instance, within available resources, investment is being made to professionalize the monitoring and evaluation function at the country level. In line with the recommendations of the review, UNDP is working to shift from a passive 'compliance' approach to one in which there is proactive demand for evaluative evidence. We want it to be viewed as an indispensable part of our dialogue with host government partners on the effectiveness of our approaches and the extent to which they are contributing to achievement of national results. The aim is to see results-based planning, monitoring and evaluation as an iterative process that enables us to work with our national partners to ensure the relevance of our work and to adapt and reshape it based on evidence while there is still time in the programme cycle to improve.

3. At the central level, the Bureau for Development Policy has established a management system for the new global programme that ensures results orientation and accountability through strengthened corporate management and compliance with UNDP programming requirements. Up to 3 per cent of the resources of the global programme have been allocated for monitoring and evaluation and for strategic reviews for learning and

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management action. This will allow the Bureau to increase the number and quality of decentralized evaluations. Similar steps are being taken at the regional programme level; for instance, the Regional Bureau for Africa has allocated 5 per cent of regional project budgets for monitoring and evaluation. The Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery is formulating a three-year results framework in line with the corporate outcomes in the Strategic Plan and is bolstering its Knowledge Management and Monitoring and Evaluation Team with two staff in New York and two in Geneva. A new results-based reporting system with strengthened monitoring and evaluation is under construction to provide regular updates on the multi-year results framework. The Partnerships Bureau is undertaking a review to ensure proper evaluation coverage for initiatives under its guardianship, and the Bureau of Management continues to work on refining the tools and systems aimed at strengthening and facilitating results-based management and evaluation.

4. In conducting audits of country offices, the Office of Audit and Investigations verifies whether evaluations and reviews conducted to assess performance of United Nations common programming tools (country programme documents [CPDs], country programme action plans) represent a coherent system that provides sufficient coverage for management for results and to support organizational accountability. More specifically, auditors ascertain whether the evaluation practice in the country office is contributing effectively to development results and whether lessons learned are incorporated for future programming. Auditors also ascertain whether there is adequate implementation of the evaluation plan, and specifically of mandatory outcome evaluations.

5. Other steps taken include the launch in 2009 of the revised Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results, which complements the Programme and Policies Operations and Procedures guide by providing practical guidance on how to plan, monitor and evaluate for development results. The new Handbook recognizes that clear results planning with national partners is a prerequisite for effective programme design and that planning, monitoring and evaluation require a focus on nationally owned development priorities and results. Since 2009, nine RBM workshops have been held at headquarters, regional and country level, training over 400 staff from 67 country offices on the Handbook's approaches. An online learning platform on managing for development results is expected to be launched by 2011.

6. The UNDP organizational culture is gradually shifting towards more systematic RBM, but it will require more time to provide better articulated results frameworks with our national partners, supported by deeper learning through peer review and evaluation. UNDP agrees that an important focus should be on whether planned programmes can be evaluated (their 'evaluability'), a prerequisite for effective programme design, continuous monitoring with national partners and evaluation. UNDP also recognizes that after Executive Board approval of the CPD, realities on the ground can shift, requiring revisions in the objective and approach to programme implementation. We commit to work closely with our national partners to maximize results articulation in a way that will facilitate evaluation throughout the planning and design process and to assist our partners (when asked) to strengthen their own capacities for RBM to improve development effectiveness.

**Proposed approach on decentralized evaluation compliance**

7. In response to the review's recommendations, UNDP proposes to (1) base evaluation compliance on full implementation of the evaluation plan developed in consultation with the government and attached to the CPD and (2) revise the current approach to decentralized evaluation compliance to better take into account the needs of country ownership and United Nations reform at the country level. UNDP offices have expressed concern that the current practice of outcome evaluation is of limited utility because it does

not provide convincing lessons with regard to the link between the UNDP contribution and the wider, multi-partner outcome. It is only through the combined contributions of many partners, notably national partners, that improved outcomes are possible. Therefore, UNDP proposes to provide country offices a greater range of decentralized evaluation instruments to discuss with national partners, including participation in multi-partner sector-level evaluations, when relevant.

8. Specifically, UNDP proposes a three-part approach to strengthening evaluation compliance: (1) higher quality project evaluations based on stronger results frameworks that more clearly articulate the link to outcome level progress; (2) participation in relevant outcome, sector, and/or programme evaluations when undertaken by partners at national level, coupled with more systematic use of midterm outcome-oriented programmatic evaluation (CPD midterm evaluation); and (3) independent coverage by the Evaluation Office through a combination of assessment of development results (ADRs) and other independent reviews at the end of the programme cycle. The conduct of outcome evaluations in partnership with the government and/or United Nations agencies and/or donors would make these evaluations more strategic and more useful for UNDP partners at the country level, including the government, while maintaining standards of independence and credibility. Clear guidance will be provided to country offices to ensure that joint evaluations include an assessment of the distinctive UNDP contribution to the shared outcome.

9. Guidance to country offices on the minimum standards for evaluation coverage will be revised based on this approach. Compliance will be judged based on the extent of coverage compared to the evaluation plan in the CPD and any revisions agreed with the government over the course of the programme cycle. Quality standards will also be integrated into the performance assessment instruments, such as the balanced score card to encourage greater demand and to motivate response to lower-than-desired quality ratings on current decentralized evaluations.

**Proposed requirement on financing**

10. UNDP country offices face recurring challenges in funding decentralized evaluations, as resources for them must be negotiated case by case. To increase the predictability of funding, UNDP will establish implementation options for country offices in new programmes starting in 2011. Such resources would need to be fungible for use in project, programme or thematic evaluations and for participation in outcome or other multi-partner evaluations in line with the approved evaluation plan. This funding would be provided only for evaluations agreed in the plan and or agreed subsequently through formal revision and approval with national counterparts. UNDP will require full costing of all evaluation plans attached to CPDs, regional programme documents and global programme documents before presentation to the Executive Board.

**Proposed approach to support decentralized evaluation**

11. In response to the review, UNDP is working to better define roles and responsibilities for decentralized evaluation. Country offices are expected to put in place appropriate institutional arrangements to manage and follow up on decentralized evaluations. As part of their oversight role, Regional Bureaux are responsible for ensuring (1) the adequacy of the monitoring plan to underpin eventual evaluations; (2) the quality of results frameworks to improve the evaluability of programmes; (3) the quality of evaluation plans, including adequate coverage of programmes; and (4) that country office institutional arrangements are adequate, monitoring visits are documented and management responses are prepared for all evaluations and action taken. For this purpose, Regional Bureaux can draw on

information available in the Evaluation Resource Centre. The role and responsibilities of country advisors are also being clarified, including as regards the conduct of evidence-based substantive discussions on results with country offices. This should, in turn, encourage demand and use of evidence from evaluation at the country office level. For its part, the Evaluation Office will continue to provide standards and guidelines to support the capacity of regional evaluation advisors.

**Use of evaluations**

12. To ensure strong leadership from senior management, "Recurring findings and recommendations from independent evaluations" is now a standing semi-annual item on the agenda of the Management Group chaired by the Administrator (covering strategic direction and learning) and the Operations Group, chaired by the Associate Administrator (covering operational follow-up). Both forums review and discuss independent and decentralized thematic evaluations, as well as management responses to global, regional and South-South programme evaluations. Whenever possible, management responses to independent evaluations of ongoing global and regional programmes are discussed with the draft programme document for the subsequent programming cycle, to facilitate learning and incorporation of evaluation findings into the design of new programmes.

13. UNDP is upgrading its efforts in knowledge management, knowledge networks, peer review mechanisms and learning from evaluation. Real-time sharing of information and experience through the knowledge systems and peer mechanisms are also important components of organizational learning and will be used more systematically to complement learning from evaluation. At the same time, UNDP recognizes that quality evaluations provide valuable evidence-based information to UNDP managers and partners on whether results are being achieved effectively towards achievement of national priorities.

14. In addition, UNDP offers the following additional comments on the methodology of the review:

(a) The Internet-based survey resulting in tables 1, 2 and 3 on the perception of why UNDP has an Evaluation Policy, knowledge about the Policy and perceptions of its usefulness had a response rate of 9 per cent. This low rate calls into question the value of this "perception" analysis, as amply recognized by the reviewers in the footnote.

(b) The reviewers recognize that the period of data collection for field visits was extremely short (30 days) and encompassed only four offices – the Johannesburg Regional Service Centre and the country offices for Egypt, Swaziland and Viet Nam). UNDP believes that more data might have helped the reviewers to form a more nuanced picture of implementation of the Evaluation Policy.

15. The annex on the following pages outlines the main recommendations of the Policy Review and the UNDP response, including steps the organization is taking to address the issues raised.

## Annex. Key recommendations and management response to independent review of the UNDP evaluation policy

**Evaluation recommendation 1.** UNDP senior management must decide whether decentralized evaluation is of a high enough priority that it is willing to commit the focus and resources needed to implement the approaches envisaged in the new Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results. Management should do this by:

(a) Acknowledging the magnitude of the challenge;

(b) Taking a clear lead in ensuring that changes envisaged are implemented as quickly and effectively as possible;

(c) Revising the UNDP Programme and Operations Policies and Procedures (POPP) where necessary, to ensure alignment between the handbook and policies and procedures; and

(d) Defining the means, capacities and timeline required to implement the changes needed to strengthen the decentralized evaluation system, and ensure resources are allocated, implementation is properly monitored and corrective action taken, if needed.

This recommendation will require changes in systems and practices across the whole planning and project cycle, with 'evaluation' being integrated into all new initiatives as they are being developed, as well as into staff appraisal systems.

**Management response:** UNDP senior management is fully committed to improving the decentralized evaluation function. Challenges to be addressed include the evaluability of programmes, minimum requirements for evaluation coverage, conduct of outcome evaluations, evaluation funding and follow-up.

UNDP will continue to train staff on RBM, based on the approaches and commitments made in the new Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results. Systems, tools and practices will be further revised, with clear accountability arrangements built in to hold senior managers in country offices, regional centres and headquarters units accountable for improvements and results focus across the whole programming cycle.

From 2010, the Management Group will discuss management responses to all independent evaluations. ADRs and their management response will be reviewed in the context of senior management discussions of results and progress against the Strategic Plan. Incentive and performance systems will be revised to motivate demand for evaluative evidence and encourage sharing and follow-up of lessons.

The Evaluation Office will continue to support UNDP senior management by providing regular briefings to the Management Group and Operations Group on recurring findings and recommendations from independent evaluations. It will continue to set standards and prepare guidelines for independent and decentralized evaluations.

The Evaluation Office is developing an e-learning course. Additionally, it will continue to collaborate with the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) on United Nations-wide training in evaluation.

The Evaluation Office will also continue to maintain the online, publicly accessible database – the Evaluation Resource Centre (ERC) – which makes available all evaluation plans, reports, terms of reference, management responses and a tracking system for follow-up actions. This aids knowledge sharing and learning, information management and oversight.

The Evaluation Office will continue to support the evaluation community of practice through ERC and continued hosting of EvalNet, the e-network on evaluation, which currently has 1,311 members.

| Key actions | Time frame | Responsible unit(s) | Tracking* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Comments | Status |
| **Compliance and funding** | | | | |
| 1.1 Make full implementation of the evaluation plan attached to the country, regional and global programme documents the basis for evaluation compliance, and present it to the Board fully costed | 2011 onwards | Regional Bureaux | | |
| 1.2 Revise guidance to include more options for decentralized evaluation coverage, including notably greater use of midterm outcome-oriented programme reviews. Outcome evaluation requirements will be revised to favour participation in multi-partner evaluations as agreed with national partners, while ensuring independence and credibility of the process | 2010 onwards | Regional Bureaux | | |
| 1.3 Revise guidance on minimum requirements for evaluation coverage at the decentralized level | 2010 | Operations Support Group, Evaluation Office | | |
| 1.4 Present options for funding of decentralized evaluations to ensure full funding of UNDP evaluation plans and flexibility, depending on country need | 2010 | Operations Support Group, Evaluation Office | | |
| **Tools** | | | | |
| 1.5 Revise the POPP and other tools and guidelines where necessary to ensure alignment between the Handbook, United Nations Development Group (UNDG) guidelines, good practice and policies and procedures | September 2010 | Operations Support Group, Bureau for Development Policy, Capacity Development Group, Evaluation Office | | |
| 1.6 Maintain regional rosters of pre-qualified evaluation experts and institutes | 2011 | Regional Bureaux, with Evaluation Office quality control | | |
| 1.7 Develop an online course on evaluation | October 2010 | Evaluation Office | | |
| 1.8 Manage ERC, embed Atlas and Enwiser and set evaluation standards and guidelines | Ongoing | Evaluation Office | | |
| 1.9 Amend existing tools such as the balanced score card to create incentives for achieving quality standards in M&E, including monitoring and evaluation | 2011 | Bureau of Management with Operations Support Group and Evaluation Office | | |
| **Monitoring and evaluation technical capacity** | | | | |

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|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1.10 Recruit at least one cohort appropriate new monitoring and evaluation advisors in each region | June 2010 | Regional Bureaux | | |
| 1.11 Strengthen M&E training and implementation follow up | Ongoing | Regional Bureaux | | |
| **Use of evaluations**<br>1.12 Elevate the systematic use of monitoring and evaluation knowledge for programme adjustments during the programme cycle, development of new programmes and advisory services and knowledge products | Ongoing | Regional Bureaux, Bureau for Development Policy, Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, Partnerships Bureau | | |

**Evaluation recommendation 2.** The senior management of UNDP will need to build on the opportunities to build national leadership and ownership in evaluation. In responding to changes introduced by the UNDG on results reporting and results frameworks used at country level, the senior management of UNDP will need to revise the new Handbook for Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results, the UNDP Programme and Operations Policies and Procedures, and other tools and guidelines.

These revisions should also recognize an ongoing need for the Evaluation Office to draw upon this data for the assessment of development results and corporate level evaluations, which are still required to meet corporate level accountability and learning objectives. The Evaluation Office should reassess its methodological guidance in the light of these changes, and work within UNEG to craft a common response on how to balance corporate and national level needs for evaluative evidence.

**Management response:** UNDP agrees with this recommendation. As part of oversight of country offices, Regional Bureaux will ensure increased broad-based involvement of national stakeholders and partners in the planning, management, conduct and use of evaluation, as advocated in the new Handbook for Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results.

Building on the new approaches to assessments of development results introduced by the Evaluation Office, guidance will be reinforced to encourage country offices to make more use of national systems (where appropriate), and country-led evaluations will be advocated as the option of choice wherever possible. In this regard, UNDP proposes to amend the evaluation policy to prioritize country-led approaches in the next generation of evaluations, as exemplified by the Government-led joint evaluation of the United Nations' role in South Africa and the country-led evaluations of Delivering as One pilots, which draw on the UNEG Framework Terms of Reference.

UNDP will revise the Handbook, POPP and other tools and guidelines (where necessary) to ensure alignment with the UNDG guidelines. The revisions will tackle the current lack of methodological clarity to allow credible assessment of the UNDP contribution.

For its part, the Evaluation Office will expand the evaluation methodology manual for all types of decentralized evaluations for programme units, including the outcome evaluation guidelines, in response to changes and trends at the UNDG level, particularly those stipulated in the new United Nations Development Assistance Framework guidelines.

The Evaluation Office has revised approaches and methodology for independent evaluations (ADRs and thematic) accordingly. The revised ADR method manual was completed in April 2010.

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| Key actions | Time frame | Responsible entity | Tracking* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Comments | Status |
| 2.1 Advocate ways to strengthen the engagement of government partners in the conduct of decentralized evaluations and management responses | End 2014 | Operations Support Group, Evaluation Office | | |
| 2.2 Expand methodology manual to address all types of decentralized evaluations | October 2013 | Evaluation Office | | |
| 2.3 Work with UNEG on country-level evaluation approaches | Ongoing | Evaluation Office | | |

**Evaluation recommendation 3**. The Executive Board should amend the evaluation policy to institutionalize the independence of the Evaluation Office. This would include:

(a) **Recruitment of the Director of the Evaluation Office**. In the current policy, the Administrator appoints the Director of the Evaluation Office, in consultation with the Executive Board, and ensures there is no conflict of interest in employment, including limiting the term of appointment to four years, renewable once, and barring re-entry into the organization. Institutionalization of independence would be significantly strengthened if the role of the Executive Board in appointing the Director were strengthened and clearly spelled out in the policy;

(b) **Recruitment of the Evaluation Office Staff**. As long as standard UNDP human resources practice is followed, the power of the UNDAF [sic] to overrule decisions made by the Director should be removed;

(c) **Clarifying relationships**. The relationship of the Director of the Evaluation Office to other senior managers within UNDP, and on what basis the Director would participate in strategic planning processes within UNDP, should be clarified;

(d) **Expanding career opportunities for the Evaluation Office Staff**. The possibilities for Evaluation Office staff to be mainstreamed into core positions in the wider organization, with opportunities to rotate and be promoted in line with standard UNDP procedures, should be strengthened; and

(e) **Budget**. The process for setting the budget of the Evaluation Office is currently described in broad terms within the present policy, whereby the Administrator is responsible for provision of sufficient resources, and the budget is negotiated triennially with the Bureau of Management. The guiding principle should be that the budget is set to adequately fund the work programme agreed upon between the Evaluation Office and the Executive Board. Good practice would be for the budget to be approved by the Executive Board as part of the Evaluation Office workplan approval process.

**Management response**: We propose the following revisions to the policy:

***Evaluation Office Director***

The Administrator will consult with the Executive Board on the appointment, removal or dismissal of the Director. The term of the Director is four years, renewable only once. After the completion of his or her term, he or she cannot seek another appointment in the organization or

* Quality at entry refers to the UNDP accountability process.

order to avoid conflict of interest. The job description will be in line with the established UNEG Competencies for Heads of Evaluation, and the post will be advertised internally and externally. The normal UNDP recruitment procedures will be followed. The Administrator will perform the annual performance appraisal of the Director in the standard UNDP format, and the result will be shared with the Bureau of the Executive Board. There will be no review by the Career Review Group.

***Evaluation Office staff***

Consistent with current practice regarding support staff, the Evaluation Office will continue to follow normal UNDP recruitment procedures. As now, professional staff job descriptions will be in line with the established UNEG Competencies for evaluators, and posts will be advertised internally and externally. The Evaluation Office will conduct technical written tests and technical interviews with external UNEG members. The panel for final, competency-based interviews will include other UNDP colleagues, including a representative from the Office of Human Resources. Throughout the process, the Office of Human Resources will guide the Evaluation Office to ensure fulfilment of UNDP policies and regulations. The Director of the Evaluation Office will take the final decision on selection after the Compliance Review Board has ensured that all UNDP policies and regulations have been followed, including those concerning gender and regional balance, and has validated the selection process.

All Evaluation Office staff, including the Director, will be recruited under the terms of contract for UNDP and will adhere to the UNEG Ethical Guidelines and Code of Conduct for evaluators. The Evaluation Office staff will have the same obligations, rights and opportunities for career advancements as other UNDP staff.

***Relationship between the Evaluation Office Director and the rest of the organization and his/her role in decision-making***

As now, the Director will not be part of the organization's decision-making processes.

***Budget***

The Executive Board will continue to approve the Evaluation Office work programme and approve its budget in the context of approval of the UNDP biennial support budget.

| Key actions | Time frame | Responsible unit(s) | Tracking* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Comments | Status |
| 1.1 Amend the Evaluation Policy to specify that UNDP will consult with the Executive Board on the appointment, renewal or dismissal of the Director of the Evaluation Office | Every four years when the term of the Director comes to an end, or as appropriate | Administrator | | |
| 1.2 Select Evaluation Office staff following UNDP procedures | Ongoing | Evaluation Office Director | | |
| 1.3 The Evaluation Office Director will not take part in the organization's decision-making processes | Ongoing | | | |
| 1.4 Continue to seek approval of the Evaluation Office budget by the Executive Board in the context of the approval of the UNDP biennial support budget | Relevant sessions of the Executive Board | Evaluation Office | | |

**Evaluation recommendation 4.** The Evaluation Office to consider the degree to which the present approach to development and implementation of assessment of development results truly contributes to country ownership. Particular issues that should be considered are: participation of

government partners in deciding the scope and focus of the assessment of development results, and consideration of the recommendations of, and management response to, the evaluation.

**Management response**: The Evaluation Office is introducing new approaches to assessment of development results. The Evaluation Office task manager conducts a preparatory mission to determine the most suitable approach for conducting the assessment in a given country. There are four broad approaches: (1) a team of independent consultant evaluators, led by an international team leader with the Evaluation Office task manager, conducts an evaluation; (2) joint evaluation with an independent national evaluation office and management by a joint evaluation management group (example: South Africa); (3) the government establishes a reference group to engage with the Evaluation Office in developing the terms of reference and drafting the report (examples: Ghana, Mongolia and Thailand); and (4) the Evaluation Office engages an independent national institution to carry out the evaluation (examples: China and Thailand). All assessments will continue to focus on UNDP accountability for its contribution to development results. In all cases, the independence of the evaluation team and the quality and utility of the evaluation will be guaranteed by the Evaluation Office.

UNDP will build on these new approaches for decentralized evaluations to strengthen country ownership.

| Key action(s) | Time frame | Responsible unit(s) | Tracking* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Comments | Status |
| 4.1 Pilot new approaches in the ADRs conducted during 2010-2011 | 2010-2011 | Evaluation Office | | |

**Evaluation recommendation 5**. The Evaluation Office should work through UNEG to clarify (a) the comparative advantage of UNDP in building capacity for evaluation at the country level; and (b) what steps should be taken by the Evaluation Office and the respective country programmes to build on this comparative advantage.

**Management response**: The UNDP comparative advantage is its ability to promote and coordinate South-South and trilateral cooperation in support of capacity building for evaluation at the country level. This will be facilitated by strengthening communities of practice in evaluation and maintaining regional rosters of evaluation experts and institutes in each region (see key action 1.6 above). Building on the excellent work already being done by some country offices, UNDP will strengthen efforts to support national evaluation capacity through South-South and trilateral cooperation, when appropriate. This will be determined country by county, based on needs and UNDP comparative advantage to provide such capacity development in the country.

The Evaluation Office held a first conference on National Evaluation Capacities in Morocco in December 2009, which served as a forum for discussion of evaluation issues confronting countries and enabled participants to draw on recent and innovative experiences of other countries. The conference promoted an understanding of international standards in evaluation and advocated for evaluation to contribute to improvements in management for development results and in public accountability and learning. The conference prepared the ground for formulation of longer-term initiatives to strengthen national capacities for public policy evaluation through South-South (or trilateral) cooperation. A network has been established and annual conferences are foreseen.

| Key action(s) | Time frame | Responsible unit(s) | Tracking* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Comments | Status |
| 5.1 Organize regular national evaluation capacity conferences | Annually | Evaluation Office | | |
| 5.2 Support national evaluation capacity through | Ongoing | Regional Bureaux, Country | | |

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|---|---|---|---|---|
| South-South and trilateral cooperation | | offices | | |
| 5.3 Strengthen communities of practice in evaluation | Ongoing | Regional Bureaux, regional service centres | | |

**Evaluation recommendation 6.** The Executive Board should consider requesting a review to be presented to the Board in 2012 covering:

- **The degree to which the roles and responsibilities laid out in the 2007 POPP and 2009 Handbook have been fully and effectively implemented;**
- **The degree to which adoption of approaches advocated in the Handbook has strengthened (i) RBM and (ii) decentralized evaluation at the country level;**
- **The degree to which independence of the EO has been institutionalized;**
- **The degree to which the policy has been implemented and made a positive contribution in UNDP's associated funds and programmes;**
- **Whether an effective approach to strengthening country ownership and capacity building has been identified and is being implemented.**

**Management response:** UNDP will keep the Executive Board informed of progress in implementation of the key actions.

| Key action(s) | Time frame | Responsible unit(s) | Tracking* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Comments | Status |
| 6.1 Regularly inform the Executive Board of progress in the implementation of the key actions | 2012 | Executive Office, Evaluation Office | | |

* Status of implementation is tracked electronically in the ERC database.

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# Evaluation of the regional programme for the Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, 2006-2010

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# I. Introduction

1. The present report provides a summary of the findings of the evaluation of the regional programme for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, 2006-2010. The evaluation was carried out between July and December 2009.

2. The evaluation was designed to assess the overall programme performance and outcomes of the regional programme in Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, as well as to evaluate contributions of UNDP through the regional programme to development results in the region. In assessing the contribution of the programme, the evaluation covered the following areas: (a) Relevance: How relevant is the regional programme to regional priority development needs and UNDP corporate strategies? (b) Responsiveness: How has the regional programme responded to the changing context within which it works? (c) Partnerships: How has the regional programme used partnership to increase the effectiveness of its support? (d) Effectiveness: How effective has the regional programme been in achieving its objectives? (e) Efficiency: Has it used its financial, human and other resources efficiently? (f) Sustainability: Are the results to which the regional programme contributes sustainable?

3. The evaluation findings and recommendations are intended to contribute to the formulation of the next regional programme and its alignment with the UNDP strategic plan, 2008-2013. The methodology included a comprehensive desk review and analysis of outcome and programme/project evaluations, monitoring reports, and other self-assessment reports. This was supplemented with five detailed country studies undertaken by members of the core evaluation team. Each was a detailed examination of the role and effectiveness of the regional programme in the country and covered the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Ukraine, Moldova, Armenia and Kazakhstan. While country studies do present a problem of generalization, they can be used to identify and highlight issues that can be further investigated across the programme. In addition, national consultants conducted six brief country studies (Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) and international consultants based in Moscow conducted one brief country study (Russian Federation).

# II. Main findings

### Regional programme

4. The Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (RBEC) regional programme document states that the overall goal of the programme is to help Governments, civil society and the private sector fulfil the Millennium Development Goals. To do so the programme has to focus on meeting three key challenges: (a) poverty reduction and economic development; (b) democratic governance; and (c) sustainable energy and environmental practices. In addressing each of these challenges, the programme makes linkages to gender, HIV/AIDS, conflict prevention and recovery, and human security (including trafficking in human beings, narcotics and weapons).

5. According to the regional programme document, regional programming has to be implemented at the regional, subregional, national and subnational levels to reflect the needs of country offices and external partners. Subregional programming has to expand further, focusing on development challenges and opportunities in Central Asia, groupings of Commonwealth of Independent States; the Western Balkans; countries seeking to join the European Union; and new European Union member countries. One of the key functions of

regional programming is to consolidate nascent communities of practice and continue to identify, codify, and disseminate best practices and development successes across the region and globally. Regional programming also has to reinforce and strengthen UNDP national programming by identifying and disseminating best practices and development successes.

6. The quality of the description of the results framework in the regional programme document is, however, low. It has logical gaps and many results indicators are poorly designed; the regional programme outcomes were revised several times and changed dramatically. Moreover, management and staff of UNDP country offices are not fully aware of the regional programme concept. Their perceptions of the regional programme are contradictory, which reflects lack of consistency in how the programme is described and presented by various parties and in various documents. There is a systemic cause for the above-mentioned contradictions and flaws in the regional programme framework: the UNDP regional programme is different from a country programme, not simply the equivalent to a country programme at the regional level

7. The regional programme is managed by RBEC Bratislava Regional Centre (BRC), which also manages the UNDP global programme interventions at the regional level. Although there are different interpretations of the programme, the de facto UNDP regional "programme" includes: (a) advisory and training services provided to the country offices; (b) design and implementation of "regional" projects; (c) knowledge services and facilitation of the exchange of knowledge through knowledge networks (communities of practice); and (d) UNDP positioning/marketing/networking in the region.

**Advisory services**

8. Overall the consulting component of the regional programme responds to country office requests very well. In fact any consultation should meet some specific client's need by default: this is the nature of the consulting business. Thus, when the context changes, clients' needs also change and the BRC responds to the changing context by meeting the changing needs of its clients and partners. Remote consultations – via e-mail and phone - provided by the BRC proved very effective. Many respondents in different countries reported on the timely and high-quality advice they had received from the centre in that way. Advanced information technology will help the BRC become even more responsive to clients requests and to the changing context.

9. While working hard on providing high-quality consulting services to its clients, the BRC is facing at least three major challenges. First, the uneven distribution of work between the consultants and the work overload of the lead consultants needs to be overcome. Distribution of work between consultants is uneven because the best BRC specialists are so popular that sometimes country offices and national partners have to wait for months to get the expert they want. Hence, a timely BRC/regional programme response to requests for specific experts sometimes is impossible. Some of the consequences of such popularity are extremely intense travel schedules and incredible workloads of the lead BRC experts. Secondly, staff turnover in the BRC is high and affects BRC performance. There is no one simple explanation for the high level of staff turnover but all respondents interviewed by the evaluation team agreed that BRC consultants work very hard and under serious pressure. Thirdly, although specialists hired by the BRC in all cases have solid professional backgrounds in their respective areas, not all of them have experience in providing consulting services and the proper skills specific to consulting services. As a result, in some cases - according to our respondents in the country offices – BRC consulting missions turn out not to be overly effective owing to the ineffective client-consultant interactions rather than the lack of consultants' expertise.

**Regional projects**

10. At the time this evaluation was conducted, the RBEC portfolio included 189 regional projects implemented since 2004. Approximately 37 per cent of regional projects are implemented in the area of energy and environment, which is more than one and a half times as many projects related to poverty reduction and over twice as many than those implemented in the democratic governance area. This shift could be explained by the availability of funds for energy and environment projects, requests from the country offices and effective work of the energy and environment practice.

11. Project ideas either result from internal regional discussions or are the regional part of large global programmes, such as the Environment and Security Initiative, the Global Compact, and Growing Sustainable Business for Poverty Reduction. The BRC facilitates the project design process, and country offices are in many (but not all) cases consulted with or actively involved in the project design. BRC staff manages regional projects implemented under the regional programme. In most other cases, the Team Leaders of BRC practices are not heavily involved in managing regional projects and are more focused on subject matters as well as on providing and supervising BRC services in their respective areas.

12. Making an assessment of the regional programme's contribution to results across a wide range of countries is extremely difficult without outcome evaluations and/or a critical mass of project evaluations. Nonetheless, based on desk reviews and fieldwork, the evaluation team has made the assessments described in the paragraphs below.

13. *Poverty and economic development.* The major contributions to sustainable development results in the areas of poverty and economic development were made through development and dissemination of knowledge products, capacity-building, and consultations. In many countries, the regional programme resulted in new policies, strategies and measurement systems implemented at the national level. The BRC poverty practice enhanced its capacity in the course of regional programme implementation and became a strong asset. UNDP flagship knowledge products, such as the regional and sub-regional Human Development Reports are a unique contribution that could hardly be made by any other agency. The creation of Web-based information sources could be considered a potentially sustainable result as well, but only on the stipulation that those recourses are maintained and updated on a regular basis by the BRC and/or its partners. Global Compact projects in the countries visited by the evaluation team did not include exit strategies for UNDP and are coming to a close, while the results achieved are unlikely to be sustained.

14. *Sustainable energy and the environment.* The key contributions of the regional programme to the development results in the area of sustainable energy and environment were made through research, development of subject-specific methods and tools, training and consultations, and dissemination of knowledge products that included Web-based resources. One of the regional projects implemented by this practice had an explicit goal of assisting country offices and UNDP partners in resource mobilization, which was greatly appreciated by the beneficiaries in the Central Asian countries. Several regional projects coordinated by this practice were truly "regional"—aimed at all the countries and provided results that could benefit all the countries. Energy and environment differs from other practices and could be explained by the nature of this subject area: many environmental issues affect all the countries regardless of the economic development and political context. In this respect, energy and environment practice has very good potential to grow and enhance its contribution to development results in the future.

15. *Democratic governance*. The key contributions to development results were made by this practice though research, development and dissemination of knowledge products, capacity development, and policy advice. Democratic governance places a special emphasis on networking. As compared to the other practice areas, the regional programme made a unique, sustainable and very important contribution to development results by establishing and enhancing a Regional Centre for Public Administration Reform to support regional cooperation. Since the contribution in the area of democratic governance depends, to a great extent, on the political context and the level of economic development of the countries involved, this practice had to be very sensitive and flexible to adjust to the variety of circumstances in different countries. Respondents in all the countries spoke highly of the potential of the current democratic governance practice. The demand for high-quality policy advice in this practice area is vast and growing. The key challenge for the regional programme will be to provide a proper level of high-quality supply. The potential of professional networks established by this practice will help the process.

16. *Crisis prevention and recovery*. The major contribution to the development results of the regional programme was made through technical assistance, but not through the regional projects. The practice team includes only three people[1] in Bratislava, hence its ability to send consultants to the RBEC countries is limited. Hiring a new consultant who will be located in Central Asia seems a good decision as that region is known for its high risk of natural disasters. It will be useful to assess the effectiveness of this approach in a few months' time when there will be enough evidence to reflect on and lessons learned to share with other practices. Meanwhile the major challenge for the newly hired consultant is coordination.

17. *HIV/AIDS*. The regional project on HIV/AIDS launched a new partnership strategy in 2007 that has already demonstrated a significant increase in delivery via strategic partnerships, both within and outside the United Nations system. That was an obvious success. The RBEC regional team has been selected to be the first UNDP regional team to co-locate with the respective UNAIDS Regional Support Team as part of a global UNDP/UNAIDS agreement. Enhanced partnerships with the United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency, the Czech Trust Fund, and others, are being pursued. On the other hand, there is no general consensus among UNDP core staff in the region on whether or not UNDP should have an HIV/AIDS component of its regional programme since the regional support role to country offices could be played by UNAIDS.

18. *Gender equality*. The major contributions made by this practice were knowledge products— reports and publications on gender issues as well as workshops on those issues. Online resources created and maintained by this practice are valued by country offices and UNDP partners. The community of practice facilitated by the BRC Gender Team is one of the most active. The gender-mainstreaming strategy is fully in line with United Nations and UNDP priorities.

**Knowledge management**

19. *Knowledge management*. Knowledge management -- the provision of knowledge services and facilitation of the exchange of knowledge through knowledge networks --is one the key components of the regional programme and one of the core functions of the BRC. The objective of the knowledge management efforts in Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States is to support the achievement of the UNDP development agenda in the region. Knowledge management does this by enabling UNDP

[1] Prior to 2009 the team included only one person.

to work in a more networked and collaborative fashion, where people's knowledge and practical experiences are leveraged to the fullest extent, with the lowest transaction costs, and as easily as possible. This is achieved by building on existing experience across UNDP in the region, and the success of communities of practices, utilizing existing networks of professionals, codifying UNDP strengths and weaknesses, and by developing new tools and methods to support knowledge management.

20. Over the past several years, the BRC has made significant progress to integrate key knowledge management activities into everyday practice work and to ensure that knowledge management is everyone's business. The role of the Knowledge Management Unit at the BRC is to ensure that these elements are constantly present and strengthened throughout the practices, offer support and capacity-building for the communities of practice, and to promote cross-practice fertilization.

21. Government officials who were involved in regional networking activities find them very useful. Benefits are twofold: they can learn about the experience of others and compare their own experience and level of development against others. Personal meetings enable people to learn the practical and detailed experience of others, to find out how things work in reality. Facilitation of partnership development for the country offices is one of the functions effectively implemented by the BRC that is very well positioned to do that. Fieldwork undertaken by the evaluation team revealed that these knowledge management activities are much appreciated by country offices.

**Strategic positioning**

22. RBEC describes the BRC as a purely internal UNDP RBEC consulting unit focused on helping country offices, which is "also managing regional projects". The regional programme (defined broadly) is automatically aligned with country programming, and sub-regional/cross-country programming through consulting and knowledge services that are provided to meet the programming needs of the country offices. With regard to the sub-regional or regional projects initiated and managed by the BRC, the situation becomes more complicated. Several respondents reported that some regional projects were designed without proper consultation with country offices. Respondents said that those projects could have been more relevant to their respective countries if the country offices had participated in the project design more actively. On the BRC side, such situations could be easily explained by time pressure natural for the "sales" process rather than by a lack of desire to have country offices on board.

23. Actual development occurs at the country level, and UNDP country offices will always stay at the heart of UNDP activities. Thus, the regional programme helps country offices and their national partners develop their capacity, design and implement their plans and measure the development results. The major strength of the regional programme and its essence are in helping others by mentoring, coaching, consulting, teaching, informing, and facilitating. The majority of respondents in the region, including UNDP staff and representatives of UNDP partner organizations, confirmed the relevance of such an approach.

24. Through its consulting, training and knowledge services the regional programme contributes to achieving the UNDP goal of becoming a "go to" agency in the areas of UNDP specialization. Promotion of UNDP knowledge products and networking at the regional level also contribute to this result. Design and implementation of regional projects and facilitation of exchange of knowledge through knowledge networks contribute to the development of inter-country cooperation as well as to scaling up successful development programmes. According to the majority of respondents, the unique contribution of the

regional programme to the projects implemented by three or more countries lies in developing project ideas, facilitation of project design and fundraising, but not in the project management.

25. The regional programme demonstrated good responsiveness to emerging situations. For example, the RBEC response to an emergency situation relates to the winter of 2008 when Tajikistan experienced a severe energy crisis. In response to the global economic crisis, the RBEC implemented a number of activities that included conferences, workshops, region-specific publications and expert presentations.

26. UNDP has successfully developed good partnerships with the European Union, especially important since more than half the countries of Central and Eastern Europe have acceded to, or are seeking to join, the European Union. The regional programme has developed important partnerships with the private sector, for example with Coca Cola, aimed at improving access to safe drinking water and other water projects in the region. It has also supported South-South partnerships and knowledge sharing proved effective. For example, Armenia's experience with the regional programme has been appreciated by Tajikistan and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and disseminated with the help of Armenian consultants. UNDP RBEC also partners with a number of United Nations organizations in the region, such as the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the United Nations Environment Programme, UNECE, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Economic Commission for Europe, the United Nations Office for Project Services, the United Nations Development Fund for Women, the United Nations Population Fund, UNAIDS, and the International Labour Organization.

## III. Conclusions

27. **Conclusion 1: The RBEC regional programme in general, and the RBEC in particular, are extremely important for fulfilling the RBEC mission in the region.** Having a regional centre (RBEC) that is closer to the beneficiaries (mostly country offices) than the RBEC office in New York strengthens the RBEC presence in the region. It has performed well across its main areas on intervention, consulting, projects, and knowledge management. The regional programme is in line with the UNDP corporate strategy and corporate goals in the region. It is also at the forefront of implementing the UNDP regionalization policy.

28. **Conclusion 2: The combination of projects, activities and services implemented by the regional programme is beyond what is traditionally called a "programme".** A regional programme is different from a country programme and could not be considered equivalent to a country programme at the regional level since the UNDP "region" simply does not have some of the essential characteristics specific to a country. Thus, a framework developed for country-level programming cannot be used for regional programming without serious revisions, and the regional programme cannot be put in a country programme framework.

29. **Conclusion 3: The regional programme has a wide variety of types of project from regional/subregional interventions to umbrella initiatives with nationally implemented components. It is difficult to say which type has the greatest value added or what the appropriate mix should be. Rather the regional programme should remain opportunistic and flexible.** The regional projects made substantial contributions to the development results in the region, especially in the areas of poverty reduction and

economic development, sustainable energy and environment and democratic governance. The "regional projects" most often cover only a few countries that face common issues. The region is so big and diverse that one can hardly develop a project relevant to all countries. Country offices find most effective those multi-country and regional projects that are developed with their participation. Participation of the country offices in the project design increases not only ownership but also project relevance. Projects aimed at creation of knowledge products and development of knowledge management and dissemination potentially can be beneficial for the entire region and can use UNDP regional capacity. Thus, such projects can become truly regional as opposed to the projects involving a few countries. Advisory and knowledge services by nature are highly relevant to any country and subregion.

31. **Conclusion 8: The BRC is at the heart of the regional programme. The BRC has a strong capacity and in-depth expertise in most UNDP priority areas. The BRC is a unique source of knowledge and advice for the country offices.** The regional programme is aligned with country programmes. The BRC is responsive to country office requests and works hard to provide the best possible services in a timely manner. The BRC was responsive to the economic crisis and implemented a number of activities to help country offices cope with the crisis. It is very well positioned to generate and further develop ideas for new projects that can be implemented at the country level or by two or more country offices. Expertise, access to information and connections with the donor community create unique advantages for the BRC as a "project design bureau". As a well-established professional "organized" organization, it plays an important role in positioning UNDP in the region. Although the way it is presented in the internal environment (a "link" between headquarters and the country offices, internal consulting unit) does not adequately reflect the nature of its services and its contribution to the development results.

32. BRC activities not only cover a broad range of subject areas, but are diverse by nature: project management business is different from consulting advisory/knowledge management business. High-quality consulting services and project management activities require different organizational capacities and different competencies of people involved. Thus, the BRC has at least two very different modes of operation: a project management mode and a consulting mode. It is important to consider that high-quality timely advisory services provided by the BRC, according to information gathered in the evaluation, are more needed and valued by the country offices than direct project execution. The BRC geographic location is convenient for the region. The BRC has little time difference with country offices. Travelling from Bratislava or Vienna is indeed more efficient for organization and easier for consultants than travelling overseas.

33. **Conclusion 9: Although the BRC is staffed by high-quality professionals and can provide good consulting services, there is room for improvement.** Consulting services will remain an essential part of BRC business but to provide high-quality performance, BRC staff will need to have not only in-depth subject knowledge and skills in their respective areas, but also excellent communication skills and advanced consulting skills. The BRC staff workload is extremely heavy. This is particularly true of the lead BRC consultants – the core BRC "asset". Their travel schedules are overwhelming, and each assignment involves very intense work and a high level of responsibility. It is stressful and there is a high risk of staff burnout. In such circumstances, high staff turnover inside the BRC is expected. BRC interventions provide most sustainable results when they include capacity development components. The only problem with that is staff turnover in the country offices and in the partner organizations: when people leave, organizations lose capacity and sustainability of the results achieved are then at risk.

## [illegible] Recommendations

[illegible] **Recommendation 1. Develop and implement a more relevant approach to programming at the regional level that recognizes the distinctiveness of regional programming within UNDP.** FHRC should consider the distinctive nature of regional programming and develop corresponding guidelines based on the existing UNDP documents and FHRC HRC experience in the region. The new approach might be radical. While results-based policy and strategy remain relevant for FHRC HRC activities at the regional level, FHRC may not necessarily use the traditional programme framework similar to the country one to describe the regional programme.

[illegible] The regional FHRC strategy based on the United Nations policies and UNDP policies and strategies sets priorities for all the countries in the region. Countries should develop programmes in accordance with the existing rules and regulations. Projects as well as activities could be designed and implemented at the regional, subregional, multi-country and country levels. This approach keeps the focus on the country programmes. It allows enough flexibility to include any projects and activities implemented in the region at various levels. HRC consulting, knowledge management and marketing activities can be included as well.

[illegible] **Recommendation 2. Focus on the development of "cross-sectoral" regional projects with an emphasis on the subregional level and ensure active participation of the respective country offices in the design of the interventions.** Regional projects should be developed predominantly at the subregional level and/or should be cross-sectoral. Geographic focus of the regional projects might be substituted or supplemented with problem focus and therefore FHRC "regional" projects may even involve countries from outside the region, such as the Islamic Republic of Iran or China. Cross-sectoral projects could involve countries that face or are affected by similar problems. Subregional programming is more natural in that respect and is supported by all country offices. In any case, it is crucial to get country offices involved in the project design at the very early stages so that the project can be more relevant to each of the countries involved and consider their similarities and differences.

[illegible] **Recommendation 3. Keep knowledge products and knowledge management services as a top priority of the regional programme and ensure adequate investment in this area.** Knowledge products and services that include development and facilitation of communities of practice proved to be relevant to the entire region and much appreciated by the country offices and UNDP partners in the FHRC region. Existing efforts to integrate knowledge management into all activities within the regional programme need to be continued and existing products simplified.

[illegible] **Recommendation 4. Reconsider the strategic position of the regional programme and its contribution to development results through high-quality development services to Governments and other UNDP partners in cooperation with the country offices, rather than as a "link" between the headquarters and country offices or an internal consulting unit focused primarily on supporting country offices and managing projects.** In its regard to strategic positioning of the HRC and the regional programme, it may be better to put an emphasis on contributing to the development results through providing high-quality technical assistance to UNDP partners in the region in cooperation with country offices. In that case, the HRC will not appear to be just an internal "link" or internal unit supporting country offices. It will look like an active partner

[illegible] a regional development, which better reflects what it really is about. It will also help to harmonize what the [illegible] does with organizations of potential donors.

36. The [illegible] needs to make a clear distinction between the project management and consulting modes of operations. The [illegible] may consider focusing exclusively on the consulting and knowledge management activities. That was recommended by most respondents from the country offices. If the [illegible] decides to keep both modes, it should review its organizational structure and systems to separate project management business lines consulting. To be effective either as project managers or as consultants, the same people should not combine the two roles. Ideally, the regional project manager should be based closer to the place where the project is implemented.

39. **Recommendation 9. Strengthen investment in the professional development of staff, specifically in the skills related to consulting activities, and carefully plan staff workload.** The [illegible] needs to build capacity of its consultants. The programme of [illegible] staff professional development should include consulting skills and customer service skills training. Training should be provided at various levels (beginner, intermediate, advanced). The [illegible] has to carefully plan its own staff workload taking into consideration their travel schedule. Maintaining travel and [illegible] and remote consultations should be mandatory. Staff rotation and cross turnover should be planned rather than assisted the [illegible] can approach one consultants for a certain period of time and then hire new people, who should be on the [illegible] list of candidates. Since the demand from the country offices and their partners for high-quality consulting services is seriously ahead of the existing supply, the [illegible] should develop and update regional rosters of consultants by practice areas. A network of pre-qualified consultants can help the [illegible] provide the proper level of supply.

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# Management response to the evaluation of the regional programme for Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States, 2006-2010*

## Context, background and findings

1. The regional programme for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, 2006-2010, was approved by the UNDP Executive Board at its first regular session in 2006. It is an instrument for realizing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It acts as a bridge between the global and country programming conducted in the countries covered by the UNDP Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (RBEC). It provides a framework for the provision of polic and knowledge-based advisory services to UNDP country offices, Governments and civil society organizations to achieve development results.

2. The evaluation report presents the findings, conclusions and recommendations resulting from the assessment of UNDP performance, achievements and results, and its strategic positioning in the region. The aim of the evaluation is to provide accountability for the achievement of results and resources used, identify successful approaches and challenges, and learn lessons from implementation in a regional setting. Most importantly, the evaluation is intended to feed directly into the development of the new RBEC regional programme to start in 2011. The evaluation was carried out between July and December 2009 and included a comprehensive desk review supplemented with five detailed country studies.

3. The evaluation concluded that the RBEC regional programme in general and the RBEC Bratislava Regional Centre in particular are extremely important for fulfilling the UNDP mission in the region. The evaluation team recognized that the Centre has a strong capacity and in-depth expertise in most UNDP priority areas and is a unique source of knowledge and advice for the country offices. It also noted that the programme is being implemented in a fast-changing region and in the complex environment of implementing the UNDP regionalization policy. In this respect, the evaluation will also contribute to the ongoing independent evaluation of regionalization in UNDP being conducted by the Evaluation Office.

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# Annex. Key recommendations and management response

| **Evaluation recommendation 1. Develop and implement a more relevant approach to programming at the regional level that recognizes the uniqueness of regional programming within UNDP.** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Management response: Relevant and acceptable, response already initiated. Project design under the new regional programme 2011-2013 was tailored to country needs and preceded by extensive consultations with national and regional stakeholders. The new regional programme addresses the key issues raised in this evaluation.** | | | | |
| **Key action(s)** | **Time frame** | **Responsible unit(s)** | **Tracking*** | |
| | | | **Comments** | **Status** |
| 1.1 Reflect evaluation recommendations in the new regional programme for Europe and the CIS, 2011-2013 | 2011-2013 | RBEC/Bratislava Regional Centre | | |
| 1.2 Initiate discussion on how the UNDP approach to regional programming guidelines and procedures can address the evaluation recommendation | December 2010 | RBEC | | |
| **Evaluation recommendation 2. Focus on the development of "issue oriented" regional projects with an emphasis on the subregional level and ensure active participation of the respective country offices in the design of the intervention.** | | | | |
| **Management response: Relevant and acceptable, response already initiated. The new regional programme document for 2011-2013 has been formulated in close consultation with country offices and other stakeholders and is enhancing subregional and area-based approach to respond to specific development needs and to coincide with the priorities of major partners in the Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States.** | | | | |
| **Key action(s)** | **Time frame** | **Responsible unit(s)** | **Tracking** | |
| | | | **Comments** | **Status** |
| 2.1 Reflect evaluation recommendations in the new regional programme for Europe and the CIS, 2011-2013 and subsequent programming | 2011-2013 | RBEC/Bratislava Regional Centre | | |
| **Evaluation recommendation 3. Keep knowledge products and knowledge management services as a top priority of the regional programme and ensure adequate investment in this area.** | | | | |
| **Management response: Relevant and acceptable, response already initiated. The new regional programme for 2011-2013 will continue to focus on knowledge management, facilitating the demand-supply flow of knowledge across the region; supporting the ability of countries to share and access experience and expertise, promoting East-East cooperation, and cooperation with other regions, as needed. The existing tools enabling the exchange of knowledge will be improved and new ones created.** | | | | |
| **Key action(s)** | **Time frame** | **Responsible unit(s)** | **Tracking** | |
| | | | **Comments** | **Status** |
| 3.1 Reflect evaluation recommendations in the new regional programme for Europe and the CIS, 2011-2013 and subsequent programming | 2011-2013 | RBEC/Bratislava Regional Centre | | |
| 3.2 Strengthen dedicated capacity for knowledge management in the Bratislava Regional Centre | 2011-2013 (additional capacities on board by December 2010) | RBEC/Bratislava Regional Centre | | |
| 3.3 Enhance supporting tools for knowledge management | 2011-2013 (Enhancements introduced by December 2010) | RBEC/Bratislava Regional Centre and BDP | | |

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|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Evaluation recommendation 4. Reconsider the strategic position of the regional programme and its contribution to development results through high-quality development services to Governments and other UNDP partners in cooperation with the country offices, rather than as a "link" between the headquarters and country offices or an internal consulting unit focused primarily on supporting country offices and managing projects.** | | | | |
| **Management response: Relevant and acceptable, response already initiated. The Regional Centre has been and will continue strengthening its capacity to provide high-level policy advice to Governments and other UNDP partners.** | | | | |
| **Key action(s)** | **Time frame** | **Responsible unit(s)** | **Tracking** | |
| | | | **Comments** | **Status** |
| 4.1 Conduct policy-centred research, and based on that research provide high-level policy advice in poverty reduction | 2011-2013 | RBEC/Bratislava Regional Centre | | |
| 4.2 Monitor and assess the social impact of the financial crisis, and based on that research provide high-level and quality policy advice | 2011-2013 | RBEC/Bratislava Regional Centre | | |
| 4.3 Strengthen capacities in the area of climate change with special attention to the policy level (climate change negotiations) | 2011-2013 (strengthened capacity secured by June 2010) | RBEC/Bratislava Regional Centre | | |
| 4.4 Monitor programming pipeline in the region to ensure prompt and efficient response to the specific needs of the region and reflect its changing development context | 2011-2013 (monitoring framework in place by December 2010) | RBEC/Bratislava Regional Centre | | |
| 4.5. Strengthen key vehicles of communication on key issues of development in the region (such as the *Development and Transition Newsletter*) | 2010-2011 (strengthened vehicles in place by December 2010) | RBEC/Bratislava Regional Centre | | |
| **Evaluation recommendation 5. Strengthen investment in the professional development of staff, specifically in the skills related to consulting activities, and carefully plan staff workload.** | | | | |
| **Management response: Relevant and acceptable, response already initiated. Talent management, succession planning and workload management will be strengthened and the annual Learning Plan designed to address the recommended skill building.** | | | | |
| **Key action(s)** | **Time frame** | **Responsible unit(s)** | **Tracking** | |
| | | | **Comments** | **Status** |
| 5.1 Ensure a core of key advisory capacities for a minimum of 2-year forward-looking time periods | 2010-2011 (already ongoing) | RBEC/Bratislava Regional Centre | | |
| 5.2 Annual Learning Plan designed based on staff needs assessment | 2010-2011 (already ongoing) | RBEC/Bratislava Regional Centre | | |
| 5.3 Close monitoring of staff surveys and timely response | 2010-2011 (already ongoing) | RBEC/Bratislava Regional Centre | | |
| 5.4. Develop Expert Exchange scheme to involve a wider pool of practitioners into advisory support | 2010-2011 (already ongoing) | RBEC/Bratislava Regional Centre | | |

* Status of implementation is tracked electronically in the Evaluation Resource Centre database.